

WISCONSIN WATERFOWL LAW ENFORCEMENT REPORT 2004-05



*Completed by:
Kevin L Mickelberg and Jeremy Plautz
Bureau of Law Enforcement
Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources
Please call 608-266-2141 for more information.*

1. Waterfowl numbers. Both local production and migrations.

Ducks—Local Populations

Most wardens reported that there were slightly lower than normal local populations of ducks. Warden Supervisor Steve Dewald of LaCrosse reported a late spring flood which impacted nesting conditions along the Mississippi river. There were “pockets” of areas where local numbers were good. Overall Wardens statewide indicated that opening weekend had good numbers of local mallards, wood ducks, and teal. Hunting became very difficult after opening weekend.

Ducks---Migration

Most Wardens reported that migrating ducks did not appear until after the close of the season. This may have been the result of excellent food and water conditions in the northern areas of the flyway giving little reason for the birds to migrate. Several wardens believe a migration shift is taking place moving the migrating birds to the west. Others feel that warm weather caused the migration to be delayed until late, or after the close of the season. Warden’s also report that when the migration did occur, there seemed to be fewer duck numbers.

Warden Comments:

- Warden John Christian of Horicon stated “duck numbers were as low as he has ever seen on the Horicon Marsh”.
- Warden Ted Dremel, Racine County reports 2004 as being one of the poorest years for numbers of geese and ducks he can remember.
- Warden Cletus Alsteen reports “I would clearly have to say this is absolutely the worst duck and goose season in 20 years at Green Lake County”.

Geese:

Local populations of geese continue to see growth especially in many of our urban environments. Wardens reported that Geese migration was significantly down from previous years.

2. Hunter numbers and densities.

Overall wardens reported a typical opening weekend with hunter numbers similar to previous years. Many commented however that after opening weekend the hunter numbers were quite low. I suspect this is directly attributable to the comments of a poor migration of waterfowl. Wardens also report a higher percentage of our waterfowl hunters are traveling to other states (North Dakota) or provinces where the waterfowl hunting is perceived to be better.

Wardens in the Northeast part of the state are reporting a significant increase in “open-water” hunting.

Several wardens continue to be concerned about the split season in which hunters who normally hunt in the South travel to the North for the first opener. The hunter conflicts associated with the split season are still apparent but seemed to be less than in previous years. Ken Thompson reported “The Northern opener was not as busy as last year. I think hunters were totally disgusted last year with the competition and maybe some did not return...”

Other Warden Comments:

- Warden Jeff Knorr, Fremont reports “Extremely high for Northern zone opener, as has been the trend the last couple of years, although user conflicts complaints were down. There is so much pressure early, that I don’t see birds staging and sticking around and without migrants down, no one hunting except same diehards”.

3. Hunter Attitudes, hunting conditions, water and weather.

Hunter Attitudes:

Wardens reported Hunters were complaining about low waterfowl numbers this year. Almost all of the Warden’s reports included comments regarding low duck numbers. Hunters seemed to keep a positive attitude

despite the low numbers of birds. As the season progressed and when the expected migrant populations did not appear, hunters became increasingly disappointed.

Hunter attitudes continue to be very positive regarding dove hunting!

Hunting Conditions:

Hunting conditions were generally poor this year. The season had for the most part sunny warm days which delayed the migration. Low water levels were also prevalent statewide. This hurt access to good hunting areas and concentrated hunters on larger bodies of water. Hunters then complained of crowding, and other hunters “sky busting”.

Warm weather made hunting difficult early, and delayed the migration until after the close of the season.

4. Hours of Enforcement effort

Wisconsin Wardens issued a total of 450 citations and 833 warnings for waterfowl and goose hunting last year.* This compares to 556 citations, and 1010 warnings the previous year. This significant decrease in arrests and warnings can be attributed to the multiple warden vacancies in the state, station budget reductions and the poor migration of waterfowl this past fall.

The top 5 arrest categories are listed below:

1. 116 Arrests—Fail to validate/report goose harvest. (Down from 142 arrests in 2003)
2. 63 Arrests—Hunt before or after legal shooting hours. (Down from 80 arrests in 2003)
3. 47 Arrests—Miscellaneous/Special waterfowl regulations (i.e. Horicon issues etc..)
4. 37 Arrests—Hunt with an unplugged shotgun.
5. 33 Arrests—Hunt without required stamps.

The most common violation detected was for hunters failing to validate /report goose harvest. Wardens issued a total of 116 citations for hunters failing to validate /report goose harvest. This is down from 142 arrests from the previous year. It should also be noted that there were 321 warnings issued for failing to sign Federal waterfowl stamp. This continues to be an issue since the automated license structure was implemented in the state.

Wardens reported no arrests for violations of the “season within a season” (Pintail/Canvasback) but there are still concerns that misidentified ducks are being shot in violation of this framework and are left in the field.

There were only 11 arrests and 31 warnings issued for dove hunting violations. The most common violation was for an unplugged shotgun. Wardens did not focus on this enforcement effort due to a small number of complaints, and limited hunting activity in most areas.

In the 2004 season, Wisconsin wardens worked a total of 7053.5 Waterfowl Enforcement Hours this and 2935.5 Goose Enforcement Hours for a **total of 9989 Hours. The hours worked is a significant reduction from hours worked in previous years and no doubt can be directly attributed in part to the many vacancies of warden stations throughout the state** (currently at 28 vacancies).

SUMMARY

2000-01 Season---11,367 hours worked

2001-02 Season---12,449 hours worked

2002-03 Season---11,804 hours worked

2003-04 Season---12,296 hours worked

2004-05 Season---9989 hours worked

Dove Enforcement Hours

This is our second year for the dove hunt. Enforcement hours were fairly consistent across the state, except that the northern part of the state saw very little hunting activity, and considerably fewer enforcement hours than other areas. Wardens worked a total of 278 Dove Enforcement Hours.

***Refer to attached arrest table for detail report of arrests/warnings.**

5. Harvest estimates and hunter success:

Wisconsin relies on the federal harvest survey for duck harvest information for Wisconsin. This information is unavailable for this report.

Wisconsin wardens perceived a significant decrease in hunter success. As can be expected, low numbers of migrant ducks and geese will result in lower hunter success rates throughout the state. Wardens reported good harvest on the openers. Wardens stationed along Green Bay and Lake Michigan reported good success on Old Squaw and Bluebills. Several hunters on Green Bay relayed stories of fantastic Bluebill shooting with four hunters bagging out within an hour and half almost every day.

Even along the Mississippi River area, which normally enjoys good hunter success, the hunter harvest was reported to be down from previous years.

Exceptional cases and innovative enforcement techniques:

Outlined below are only a few of the arrests and innovative techniques taken directly from warden reports:

Exceptional Cases

Warden Henry Bauman

Henry Bauman assisted a Minnesota warden in apprehending an intoxicated duck hunter on the Minnesota side of the state line on the boundary waters.

Warden Mike Cross

Warden Cross received a complaint of illegal hunting in a closed area near the Lynxville area. Upon investigation, Warden Cross located the hunters who were in Iowa waters. Iowa Conservation Officer Bill Collins was contacted. Both wardens made contact with the 4 hunters. A total of 12 citations were issued (\$2,500.00 in total fines) and 17 waterfowl were seized.

Warden Marty Stone and Supervisor Chuck Horn

Wardens Stone and Horn contacted a pair of hunters on the second morning of the season at the Bagley Bottoms boat landing. When asked if they had any luck one hunter replied that they had shot their limit of wood ducks the day before and they were in the back of his pick-up truck. Inspection revealed five wood ducks. The subjects then said that one of their other companions must have left one of his ducks there. Wardens accompanied the subjects back to their camp and found that one of the other subjects had "group-bagged" for his buddies, shooting four wood ducks and a ringnecked duck on opening day.

Warden Brian Knepper

Warden Knepper contacted two hunters shooting at ducks 32 minutes after the season. Warden Knepper observed flames coming out of the barrel during their last barrage at incoming wood ducks. In addition one hunter did not have a small game license.

Wardens Paul Martin and Supervisor Dave Zebro

Wardens Martin and Zebro located two waterfowl hunters along the Burnett and Washburn County line. Warden Zebro walked down the river to observe their activities. While watching the hunters he observed them shoot two wood ducks. One hunter then walked to the edge of the island they were hunting on and start dressing out several birds. Warden Zebro was sure he counted six wood ducks while the hunter cleaned them. Warden Zebro contacted the hunters as they come to shore. Upon contact, one hunter tossed a bread bag with four wood ducks breast with the heads attach to Warden Zebro. When questioned about the other birds they both denied having anymore birds. Warden Zebro then completed a thorough search of their equipment and located a duck breast in the end of a gun case. During the search Warden Zebro interviewed them about hunting at another marsh earlier in the day. Upon being interviewed they admitted to harvesting 3 wood ducks earlier the afternoon. Wardens Martin and Zebro then followed the hunters back to their cabin and retrieved the three wood ducks that were harvested earlier in the day. A

box of lead shotshells was also located in the boat during the search. Confident that he observed six ducks in the marsh, Warden Zebro canoed to the blind at first light the next morning locating the sixth bird, a hen wood duck that they left in the marsh. The hunters received citations for over-bagging, possessing lead, having waterfowl without a head or wing attached and malicious waste of a natural resource.

Warden Dave Algrem

Dave Algrem assisted a North Dakota warden in the investigation of a hunter from Waushara County for over-bagging violations. Subject admitted to shooting well over his daily limit on two days of a 4-day ND hunting trip. The hunters had given their possession limit of 36 duck breasts to a landowner in ND. The Wisconsin hunters came home with another possession limit of breasted out ducks most of which had been shot by one of the three hunters. Prosecution in ND is moving forward.

Warden Cletus Alsteen

Cletus Alsteen observed three hunters with 30 some captive bred Mallards and Mallard hybrids swimming in front of their blind and amongst their decoys for opening day. No shots were fired at these ducks and only wild free flying ducks were shot. Three individuals were cited for hunting with the aid of live decoys.

Warden Mike Young and Regional Warden Byron Goetsch

Mike Young assisted Warden Byron Goetsch with checking some hunters who left their decoys out overnight. The hunters ended up over bagging on wood ducks, hunting with lead shot, unplugged shotgun, hunting from an open water blind, no name on a blind, unregistered ATV, unattended decoys, no life jackets and shooting muskrats. This was a group which wardens have had previous complaints on and had watched in 2003 without any violations recorded.

Warden Heather Gottschalk

In one case of failure to tag and validate a goose carcass tag Warden Gottschalk drove two hunters over to their vehicle to get their tags. Both seemed slightly agitated at the fact that they were being checked. The one hunter did not have a goose down and went back hunting once he showed them to Gottschalk. The other did not have any of his license or stamps with him and did have a goose down, which was not tagged and had not been for several hours. Warden Gottschalk spent some time talking with both hunters. A variety of subjects were discussed to include hunting dogs and hunting methods. Prior to leaving, the hunter who had received a citation stated "I understand, you have a job to do. We were talking and we agreed this isn't as bad as we thought it was going to be because you're so damn nice." Before parting ways, Warden Gottschalk referred the hunter to a friend of hers who breeds labs and owns a reputable kennel, as the hunter was looking for a new pup. The hunter laughed and stated "wouldn't that just be weird if I bought a dog from someone the game warden that wrote me a ticket knows?" Her friend later informed Warden Gottschalk that the hunter had purchased a pup from her. All is well that ends well.

Wardens Casey Krueger and John Buss

In April of 2004 Conservation Warden Casey Krueger of Portage received a complaint about two individuals that were driving around the Columbia County countryside illegally shooting animals from a truck in the early spring. The complainant stated to Warden Krueger that the two suspects had shot ducks, sandhill cranes, and turkeys with a .17 caliber rifle from their vehicle. Warden Krueger enlisted the help of Warden John Buss of Sauk City in the investigation of the complaint. Since the wardens had enough information on the suspects and what had occurred they went to the suspect's home and talked to them about the violations. When confronted with the facts, the suspects confessed to a shooting spree that was way beyond imagination. Over a several day period the two men shot multiple ducks, cranes, turkeys, pheasants, and deer while just driving around the countryside. The majority of the animals were shot from the inside of the truck parked on the remote roads of Columbia County. Some of the deer were skinned and shot at night. Most of the game was left in the field to rot by the thrill-seeking poachers. In the end the suspects were charged with multiple criminal and forfeiture counts of illegal hunting. The end result was well over \$14,000 dollars in penalties levied against the two men and loss of hunting and fishing privileges for 3 years apiece. The firearms used by the poachers were ordered to be destroyed by the court. The two men were also sentenced to jail for 20 days and put on probation for 3 years. On top of that the two men were sentenced to 500 hours of community service. In the end it probably was not the thrill that they were looking to find.

Warden John Buss and Casey Krueger

Warden John Buss assisted Warden Krueger with waterfowl enforcement efforts on Lake Sara located in Columbia County. The Wardens watched several groups shoot at black birds and swallows that were flying through the marsh. The Wardens also observed a group of hunters shoot a mallard and fail to retrieve it. All of the wildlife that was shot was simply left to rot in the marsh. The Wardens contacted the subjects who admitted to the violations. The subjects were cited for the offenses.

Wardens Stewart Smith, Lyle Manteuffel and UWSP Interns Joe Paul and Ben Herzfeldt

Stewart Smith, Lyle Manteuffel and UWSP interns Joe Paul and Ben Herzfeldt teamed up to make arrests on three persons that shot trumpeter swans on the opening day of the southern season on two different marshes. In one of the cases, it was Smith and Herzfeldt's continued investigation that led to an arrest after a hidden swan was found two weeks after it was killed.

Warden Korey Trowbridge

Korey Trowbridge made two good cases involving investigative follow up. The first involved a complaint regarding several goose carcasses and litter dumped during the early September goose season. Using the Harvest Reporting System, local suspects were identified. Investigation resulted with 1 littering citation. In the second, Trowbridge was told that 2 hunters in a blind had shot 2 geese. Trowbridge had checked the 2 hunters earlier in the day and warned them for not having the owner's name displayed on the blind. A check of the ALIS system revealed 1 of the hunters did not have an exterior goose permit. Investigation revealed 1 hunter shot both geese and also failed to report the harvest. 1 citation was issued for shooting over the bag limit.

Warden Tim Price

Warden Price issued citations to two waterfowl hunters for hunting late. One subject discharged his firearm two times at a pair of wood ducks 26 minutes after close. That same subject was given an additional citation for shooting a pied billed grebe. Warnings given to the same group for no boat lights, operating greater than slow-no-wake, & failure to have battery terminals covered.

Warden Jennifer Niemeyer

Warden Niemeyer was working a group of goose hunters near the state line. Niemeyer observed 3 hunters field hunting out of a blind along the corn field. Niemeyer watched the individuals for 2 hours. They took several shots at geese but did not harvest any. The individuals had 10 flocks of geese fly over them after the close of hunting hours. They continued to hunt geese 36 minutes after the close. Upon contact the individuals stated they "certainly" would have shot if the geese would have decoyed. This was their first goose hunting experience in Wisconsin.

Warden Jason Roberts

Warden Roberts received a complaint of a goose hunter trespassing near an industrial pond in Franksville. The complainant provided Roberts with a description and license plate of the hunter's vehicle. Roberts was able to contact the Racine SO to get the individuals name. Roberts then checked the hunters ALIS records and found the hunter did not purchase any licenses or stamps. Roberts conducted an interview, and the hunter admitted he was goose hunting and did not purchase a small game license, a state waterfowl stamp or a federal waterfowl stamp. Roberts also found that the hunter had previously shot a goose and had not validated his Ext. Permit or reported the goose harvest to the DNR. Roberts issued 2 citations totaling \$350 and issued 3 warnings.

Wardens Boyd Richter and Shawna Stringham—Hunting Incident Investigation

A hunting accident investigation resulted in one hunter being cited after he shot a companion in the head with T-shot. The companion and shooter were walking out of a marsh on a WPA and a wood duck jumped up between the two. The shooter did not identify what was beyond his target. After being hit, the victim passed out and fell into the water, nearly drowning. The victim was pulled out of the water and was eventually transported by ambulance to the hospital. The victim recovered but still has a T-shot in his brain. Richter assisted in the investigation with warden Stringham. The shooter was cited for hunting after hours and possession of toxic shot.

Wardens Dale Hochhausen and Jon Hagen

Wardens Hochhausen and Hagen checked two hunters hunting on a pond located about 1½ miles in on the New Munster State Wildlife Area. Wardens observed the two individuals shooting at both ducks and geese. Two minutes after closing hours, both individuals shot at two geese that were over one hundred yards high. Wardens

checked the individuals as they left the area. One of the individuals did not have a state stamp, federal stamp and exterior goose permit. The other individual also did not have an exterior goose permit. Neither individual was wearing a watch, nor did they know when closing hours were. Both individuals would have probably hunted even later, but they ran out of shotgun shells.

Warden Mark Shepherd

Warden Shepherd was involved with a case involving an excellent cooperation with a lakefront homeowner resulted in the arrest of a duck hunter who shot two of three whistling swans that landed in his decoys on Lake Butte des Morts. The hunter attempted to conceal the swan in his vehicle and continued to hunt. Complainant also documented the hunter transporting and shooting from a moving motorboat while pursuing the injured swans. Hunter was found guilty in court and revoked from hunting for 1 year.

Opening day Warden Shepherd and Higgins contacted a hunter walking from a backwater to his boat along the Fox River, west of Omro. The hunter had been observed shooting at unidentifiable waterfowl and displayed 2 wood ducks in his game bag. Duck tail feathers visible in his left hip boot lead to a third wood duck hidden in his boot.

Warden Ed McCann

Warden McCann is involved in a multi-state case that stemmed from a taxidermist audit. USFWS lab testing showed a different season of death than the hunter's statements. The case involves illegal ducks shot during the spring snow goose hunt. Case is still pending.

Innovative/Successful Enforcement Techniques

Warden Brad Peterson—"Chat room" Investigation

Warden Peterson got a tip where a local hunter reported a late season goose hunt on a Website "chat room". He reported over-bagging on geese. Warden Peterson made contact and found many other violations on reporting goose harvests, additional geese taken and a companion with 7 illegal turkeys and additional geese over possession limits.

Warden Niemeyer met and gave educational presentations to both the Kenosha Police Dept and the Kenosha County Sheriff's Dept about waterfowl hunting enforcement in Kenosha County.

6. Problems or concerns

Outlined below are some of the concerns/problems reported by Wardens.

- **Warden Vacancies:** Several wardens reported that warden vacancies in their area have caused a significant increase in workload in an effort to cover the vacant areas. This increased workload has a very negative impact resulting in reduced time in the field responding to complaints and directed patrol. Arrests and warnings are significantly down this year which can be attributed at least in part because of the many warden stations that are vacant throughout the state.
- **Hunter conflicts/ethics because of split openers:** Many Wardens stationed in the northern season zone continue to report problems associated with the split opening weekends. Wardens report an influx of hunters during the northern opener, which creates hunter conflicts and promotes poor hunter ethics especially on our public hunting areas. Several wardens however did report that hunter conflict complaints and related issues were less than previous years.
- **Big-water hunting safety concern:** Wardens are continuing to reporting an increase in big-water open water hunting activities which include hunters with little experience dealing with big-water risk factors. Wardens are suggesting that "big-water" education to open-water hunters be increased.
- **Mud Motor Concerns:** Warden John Christian, of Horicon, found an interesting phenomenon that was occurring in the Horicon Marsh. There are some disturbing trends arising regarding mud motors. Those not having mud motors are complaining about those who use them. (In some cases justifiably so). The mud motors

do “root-up” a significant amount of submerged aquatic vegetation, especially during pre-season scouting which may contribute to feed loss in those areas to waterfowl. “I have also documented three situations where mud motor users dragged large logs and even RR ties into small channels in the Horicon Marsh to block travel by outboard motors. These obstructions would not be an impediment for a mud motor. This is an obvious ploy to dissuade some duck hunters from entering certain hunting spots”.

- **Concerns over local ordinances affecting waterfowl hunting:** Warden Rick Reed, Walworth County, identified the most pressing issue for waterfowl hunters to be movements by lake associations to pass ordinances to indirectly ban hunting. Most lake associations know that they cannot pass laws specifically against hunting, but will try to accomplish the same thing through other local ordinances not directed specifically towards hunting.
- **Hunter complaints about multiple licenses/permits:** Some Wardens reported checking hunters that were frustrated with all of the licensing requirements to go waterfowl hunting. Hunter’s are questioning the need for small game licenses, state duck stamps, goose permits, and federal duck stamps just to go duck hunting. One hunter that just started waterfowl hunting commented that it did not seem reasonable to have to spend over \$40 dollars in licenses and permits.
- **Waterfowl Identification Issues:** Several Wardens reported hunters displayed a problem with correctly identifying duck species both in the bag and on the wing. Numerous hunters simply got lucky that they had not shot ducks over their bag limits or during the closed seasons within the season. For example, Warden Darren Kuhn contacted a hunter who was sure he had bagged an immature drake blue wing teal when in fact he had bagged a hen wood duck. Warden Kuhn also encountered hunters who could not tell the difference between a widgeon and a pintail.
- **Confusion over the North/South season zones and the North/South hunting timetable:** Wardens in Northeast Wisconsin reported problems with hunters being confused over the season zone and hunting timetable in the regulations. Hunters become confused referring to one map in which they are in the Southern hunting timetable zone and the other in which they are in the Northern season zone.
- **Fail to report goose harvest:** A widespread problem continues to be hunters failing to report their Canada goose harvests. Many wardens believe hunters know they need to report the goose harvest but are reluctant to because if they report all their harvested geese, hunters believe that it may close the goose season early. This violation has ranked the number 1 violation for the past couple years and continues to be a significant problem.
- **Federal Stamps not signed/Fail to possess:** Many wardens continue to report a widespread problem with hunters failing to sign their federal waterfowl stamp. Warden Russ Fell, Rice Lake, reported about 30% of hunters checked had failed to sign federal stamp. Wardens issued 321 warnings for this violation. Almost all the hunters had the stamp on the original paper backing. Wardens are issuing verbal warnings in most of these contacts and are having hunters sign the stamp in the field. Most wardens do not believe we have a problem with hunters transferring stamps to other hunters however. Some wardens are suggesting exploring the possibility of including the federal stamp on the ALIS system.
- **Lead Shot and Dove Hunting:** Several wardens reported concern about allowing lead shot to hunt dove in areas where it is illegal for waterfowl hunting. In many of our public hunting areas, wardens can contact a group of dove hunters shooting a lot of lead into the marsh and have no violation, yet next to them cite a waterfowl hunter who possesses lead shot. How can we have two standards in dealing with the lead shot issue? Steps should be taken immediately to restrict the use of lead shot in these situations.
- **Non-toxic Shot size concern:** Current law provides for non-toxic shot sizes to be legal to the size “T”. New technology has enabled shotshell manufacturers to develop shot which performs at or above the level of lead. Is there a safety concern using these “high-performing” shotshells in the sizes larger than BB?

8. Officer Training:

Officer waterfowl training took place at several fall regional and team meetings. Comments were positive in regards to these meetings and thanks given to wardens Mike Neal and Cletus Alsteen for the training received at the NER Regional meeting. It was also noted that Warden Alsteen and Supervisor Carl Mesman have created a duck ID PowerPoint presentation which received high remarks. This presentation is available on the central server for others to view and use as a training tool. All of the Wardens seemed to have positive comments regarding these refresher courses, and felt that it should continue in the future.

Additional training courses were lead shot detection by Warden Scharbarth and the use of the “Hotshot” detector. USFWS agents presented information regarding baiting issues.

9. Youth involvement/education and Youth hunts; problems, concerns and attitudes:

Wisconsin conducted a 2-day youth hunt on September 18th and 19th.

Wisconsin wardens report the following points about the youth hunt:

Overall Wardens believe this is a positive hunt that was enjoyed by all parties involved with at least some participation throughout the state.

However, there were concerns raised regarding this Youth Hunt:

1. There are still concerns being raised by hunters about the duck being “scared off” prior to the regular season opener by the youth hunt.
2. Concerns are being voiced that this youth hunt is not doing what it was intended to fulfill. Young hunters in the field during this weekend are typically the same hunters who are in the field with their parents during the regular season. Some Wardens are concerned that this is only allowing another weekend for current hunters rather than “teaching” new duck hunters. It was suggested that this weekend should be incorporated into the “Learn to hunt” program, and include involvement from Wardens, waterfowl partners, and current hunters.
3. Another concern raised was the issue of having the youth hunt overlapping the goose season, which allowed for adults to be hunting and thus the complaints of adults shooting at ducks. Most wardens feel that the adults should be more focused on teaching a new hunter legal and ethical methods rather than trying to bag a goose.
4. Because the youth hunt takes place early in the fall, waterfowl identification can be a problem.

Wisconsin wardens participated in many Greenwing events (or similar in nature) throughout the state. These events continue to be well attended and liked by all in attendance.

10. Waterfowl Hunter Education Efforts:

Wisconsin wardens were very active in all aspects of education of our waterfowl hunters. Many of these education efforts continue from year to year. Below list a few of the education initiatives wardens were involved with this past year.

Educational Initiatives

- Warden Dale Hochhausen, Burlington, helped coordinate a disabled goose hunt in his administrative area.
- Wardens attended many “green-wing” days and gave training on waterfowl identification and conservation issues.
- Wisconsin wardens set-up a major display at the annual Ducks Unlimited Outdoor Days in Oshkosh over 77,000 people attended the event.
- Many wardens discuss waterfowl issues at hunter education classes.
- Warden Casey Krueger, Columbia County, in cooperation with Columbia Sporting alliance, set and implemented the second annual “youth day” in the county focusing on waterfowl education.
- Warden Krueger also continued the “seed program” for Columbia County in which seed is distributed to landowners for the planting of wildlife/waterfowl food plots.
- Wardens statewide use “ducks on a stick”, and wing-boards at county fairs, and booths.
- News releases addressing waterfowl questions and problems.
- Wardens spent extra time during field contacts giving identification training to hunters.

- In an effort to promote compliance with transportation laws, Wardens distributed posters showing a properly field dressed duck with head and/or wing attached.

11. Problems, concerns and thoughts on Wisconsin's Dove Season:

Wardens reported that in certain areas of the state there was an identifiable increase in hunter involvement this year compared to last. There are even "robo" dove decoys being used which seem to improve success.

Wardens reported little to no complaints of violations and the overall hunt was considered a non-event enforcement wise. Statewide, wardens only issued 11 dove related citations and 31 related warnings. The most common warning issued was hunting with an unplugged shotgun.

Wardens reported that our public hunting land was heavily used in the southern part of the state, and hunters had some good shooting.

Warden Comments:

- Warden Steve Sanidas, Milwaukee, reports that dove hunting is becoming a popular activity for many hunters in Southeastern WI. Many hunters advise that they enjoy having the opportunity to hunt early in the fall and it gives them some good practice shooting prior to the duck season.
- Warden Doug Zeihen, Waukesha, reports the dove season is a huge success in southern Waukesha County. Since no special equipment or talents are required (decoys, waders, dogs) high school kids are much more prevalent in my hunting areas and enjoying good shooting (if not good marksmanship) opportunities. We are recruiting a new generation into the hunting community with this new season. The Hispanic community is enjoying this season at a much higher rate than the traditional seasons as well. This is probably due to dove hunting being a traditional sport from the Southern part of the continent.

Concerns/Problems Identified Regarding the Dove Hunt:

- **Lead Shot Issues:** Several wardens reported a concern that is being reported that hunters are shooting at doves over open water in traditional Waterfowl hunting areas. This creates two problems. All of the lead shot restrictions that we have enforced over the past 20 years is being made useless because of the lead being put in the same waters by dove hunters (which obviously puts the waterfowl at risk for lead poisoning). The second problem is enforcing the lead shot law on a waterfowl hunter for using the same shell as the dove hunter who is standing 20 feet away and is legal!
- **Hunting Hours Issue:** Several wardens reported hunter confusion regarding the hunting hours timetable. The hunting hours are listed in the small game regulations and require the hunter to subtract 20 minutes from the table. It is suggested we have a separate time table for dove hunting which reflects the sunset timetable.